

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

WAIT TILL YOU DIE.

PASCAL remarked that, whether Christianity were true or false, the Christian was on the safe side; and Diderot replied that the priests and apologists of Mohammedanism, or any other creed, could say the very same thing with equal force. The argument, if it be an argument, implies the possibility of error, and what applies to one religion applies to all. The votaries of every creed may be mistaken if there is no absolute certitude; or, if there should be one true religion among the multitude, and but one, only the devotees of that single faith can be on the safe side. But as no one knows *which* is the only true religion, it follows, according to the law of probabilities, that the odds are greatly against any particular religion being the right one. The Christian therefore would have one chance of being right, and nine hundred and ninety-nine chances of being wrong. He has thus one chance in a thousand above the Atheist.

But on the other hand, if all religions but one are certainly wrong, what is the chance of a single one being certainly right? Does not the Christian's slight percentage of safety fade into something quite inappreciable in the light of this question? And is what is left—if *anything* is left—an adequate price for the abnegation of manhood? Would it tempt an honest man, with a sense of human dignity, to play fast and loose with his intellect, and accept a creed because it appeals to his selfish hopes and fears? Could such a slender chance of profit in the next life compensate for slavery in this life?

If belief is the safe side, the proper course is to believe *everything*. And it is useless to cry that this is impossible. Faith enables men to believe against reason, and one act of credulity is little easier than a thousand. He whose creed is determined by his fears should give free scope to such emotions. If they are his guides let him follow them. Why should he argue when argument may mislead? Why should he stumble at trifles when he has surmounted the first great obstacle to credulity? Let him believe all the religions of the world at once. He can do this as easily as he can believe in the Trinity. And having embraced all, he may rest satisfied that if there be a true religion he undoubtedly possesses it.

We do not suppose, however, that this reasoning will have any effect on Christians, Buddhists, Brahmins, Mohammedans, or Jews. But that very fact shows the hollow character of the argument from which we started. When the Christian talks about the safe side he is only displaying the weakness of his faith, and appealing to timidity when he has no further appeal to reason.

The argument of "the safe side" would have no pertinency, even with the imbecile, if man were immortal. It seeks advantage from the fact that every man must die. It tries to paralyse reason with the clutch of fear.

How frequent is the superstitionist's remark "Wait till you come to die!" He does not always use these very words, but this is the meaning of all his verbiage.

No. 478.]

He forgets, or does not know, that philosophy destroys the terror of death. A rational man is aware of the truth expressed by Mill, that death is but one incident in life, and often the least important. He recognises with Bacon that we die daily. He knows that every hour is a step towards death. He does not play, like an ostrich, with the universal law of mortality; nor, on the other hand, does he allow the tomb to cast its chill obscurity over the business and pleasure of life. He lives without hypocrisy, and when the time comes he will die without fear. As Hamlet says, "the readiness is all." Another word also comes from the wisest of men—"Cowards do often taste of death; the valiant die but once."

A belief that will do for life will do for death. The religionists prove this themselves. Whatever a man is confident of is sustaining. The Christian dies a Christian, and the Mohammedan a Mohammedan. The one has dying visions of angels—or may be of devils; the other sees heaven burst open, and the black-eyed houris of paradise beckon him with rosy fingers. What they leaned on in life supports them in death. Its truth or falsity makes no difference at that moment.

Freethinkers are sustained by *convictions*. Intellect and emotion concur in their case. They have no visions of angels or devils, but dear loved faces are better than phantoms, and he who has done a little good in the world, however humbly and obscurely, may dream of the happier and nobler days to come, when true words and good deeds will have brought forth the glorious fruit of happiness for the children of men.

We do not mean to assert that no Freethinker, at any time, ever relapsed on his death-bed. Such cases have apparently occurred during life, and while one particular religion is in the ascendant it is not difficult to understand them. These relapses are always to the creed a man finds about him, or to the creed of his childhood. They simply prove the power of environment and early training, and that a man needs all his strength to stand against big majorities. At best they are cases of mental pathology.

Great historic Freethinkers have always died true to their convictions. They were used to standing alone. For ample proof of this the reader is referred to *Infidel Death Beds*. And when smaller Freethinkers are numerous enough they avoid the greatest dangers of physical weakness. It is easy for Christian relatives or friends to pester a dying Freethinker; it is easy even, in the worst moments of weakness, to put words in his mouth. But if Freethought friends visit him, he feels strengthened and relieved. Allies may well be needed, sometimes, in such a battle with bigotry.

After all, "Wait till you die!" is an argument of folly and cowardice. What can we conjecture of any other life except from our experience of this? On this earth reason is the safe side, honesty is the safe side, humanity is the safe side; and what is the safe side here is likely to be the safe side elsewhere.

G. W. FOOTE.

WHY ATTACK THE CLERGY?

It is not altogether an enviable task to have to attack and expose a particular class of men. Wholesale condemnations are, with reason, regarded with suspicion, yet with all desire to be charitable we find it as hard to credit that the clergy are honest, as Jesus found the way of the rich man to heaven. They are sworn to believe they are called by the Holy Ghost. Is not this, as Carlyle says, to solemnly constitute oneself an impostor at the threshold? They are sworn to believe in articles and creeds which they dare not preach. What clergyman, for instance, really holds "That works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God." (Art. xiii.); that "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth is that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature" (Art. xviii.) The articles of the Church of England are Calvinistic, but their general teaching the very reverse.

Some people wonder why in these days of science, the old Jewish fables of Genesis still rank as divine. The answer is: because they are endowed. Had the belief in alchemy or astrology been supported with millions of property as the Church has been, those beliefs would still be flourishing. Of course some few may sincerely hold the beliefs in which they have been trained, but the alternative of dishonesty is ignorance. Every clergyman ought to know such elementary facts that Christianity is but one of many faiths that have occupied the minds of men, and that science and research have undermined many of its foundations.

Not only in doctrines, but in discipline, the clergy are bound to forms they no longer hold. Their rubrics and canons, drawn up over three centuries ago, are no longer suited to the requirements of the Church, and on every side we see they are broken and disregarded by those sworn to obey them; even a bishop being at present under trial for this offence.

Let us say at once that we consider the bulk of Nonconformist ministers in the same box with their brethren of the established Church. It is true they are paid by their own congregations. Yet they accept office under conditions they do not fulfil. Nearly every chapel has a trust-deed prescribing creeds which the ministers neither believe nor preach. That is, the ministers and congregations of these chapels hold the buildings and endowments, in alienation from their trusts and in violation of the law. Where trust-deeds have been loosely drawn, as in the case of the early Presbyterians, many of them have passed into the hands of Unitarians. Where more tightly drawn they are flagrantly violated. It is safe to say there are no chapels holding defined trust-deeds from last century where the doctrines preached are in strict accordance with the terms upon which the chapels were endowed.

Nor do we find the Nonconformists as a body one whit less worldly than the Church of England. They, too, aim after social position and endowment, and pride themselves on that wisdom which Paul declared was "foolishness with God." They, too, slide over the dogmas of their faith, seek to reconcile contradictions, and expound impossible ways of making the best of both worlds, in flat antagonism to Jesus (Matt. vi., 24). Like the clergy, they preach principles flagrantly opposed to their own practice.

There can be no improvement in a system whose essential tenets are the fall of a first man through the temptation of a woman made from his rib, and the redemption of his descendants long afterwards, through the merits of a crucified God, the illegitimate offspring of a virgin mother and a ghost, and the consignment of unbelievers to eternal torment.

The people who make a trade of preaching this pernicious nonsense are enemies of society. They are caterpillars of the commonwealth. They toil not, neither do they spin. Yet annually they consume millions upon millions of the nation's wealth. Their creeds stand in the way of all progress, and the parasites themselves have, as a class, always been foremost in opposition to any attempts at improving the lot of the masses. What keeps the working man from enjoying the museums he is taxed to support on his one day of rest? The clergy and ministers, whose interests lie in having the monopoly of Sunday for their own establishments. It is not, then, only against superstition that we must maintain an aggressive attitude, but also against its interested exponents.

J. M. WHEELER.

A NEW CREED.

A GROUP of theologians met
To modernise their creed,
Which held that black is white, and yet
Had satisfied their need.

Their great-grandfathers learned it on
Their great-grandmothers' knees,
About predestination and
Electoral decrees.

In language more ambiguous
Than Latin upside-down,
It taught that some were born to sin
And some to wear the crown.

These learned theologians fought,
Disputed, argued long;
And each one held that he was right
And all the rest were wrong.

They all admitted that the creed
Was somewhat out of date,
But still they were not all agreed
Just what to renovate.

But when their work was finished quite,
Their creed did nothing lack;
For where it once read "black is white,"
It now reads "white is black."

E. FRANK LINTABEE.

WHAT HE WAS ROARING ABOUT.

Highlanders, as we know have the habit when talking English, such as it is, of interpolating the personal pronoun "he" where it is not required, such as "The king he has come." Often, therefore, a sentence, or expression is rendered strange, as we are going to prove. The Rev. Mr. McD —, of a certain Highland parish, recently began his discourse thus: "My brethren, you will find the subject of this discourse in the first Epistle-General of the Apostle of Peter, chapter five, verse eight, in the words 'The devil he goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.' Now my friends, with your leave, we will divide the subject into four heads. First we shall endeavor to ascertain who the devil he was. Second, we shall inquire into his geographical position—namely, where the devil he was. Third, and this is of a general character—who the devil he was seeking. Fourthly and lastly, we shall endeavor to solve a question which has never been solved yet—what the devil he was roaring about."

CLERICAL CELIBACY.

Mr. H. C. Lea in his *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, vol. i., p. 31, 1888, says: "Deprived as was the priesthood of the gratification afforded by marriage to the natural instincts, the wife, at best, was succeeded by the concubine; at worst by a succession of paramors, for which the functions of priest and confessor gave peculiar opportunity. So thoroughly was this recognised that a man confessing an illicit amor, was forbidden to name the partner of his guilt for fear it might lead the confessor into the temptation of abusing his knowledge of her frailty."

HE WAS CONVERTED.

I RECENTLY spent a week's holiday at a Hydropathic in the west of Scotland, where I met with more than one strange specimen of human kind. Among them was an undersized Methodist parson who occupied his time by marching about the grounds, either gazing into the heavenly vault, or strutting like a peacock, evidently under the impression that every eye was following his movements. This black-beetle, when addressing Jehovah, turned his face upwards and laid down the law with vigor. He swung his arms about, and postured. There was, with him, no hanging of the head in prayer; no clasping of the hands; no going into a corner; no outward appearance of humility. He knew exactly what he wanted and boldly made his requirements known. I only heard him pray once, but he said grace three times a day at table and seemed so barren of ideas that the same words—very few in number—were parrot-like, uttered over and over again without the slightest variation. Grace said, he always looked round the room with a self-satisfied smile while he adjusted his table napkin. But I began to write with the intention of repeating a good story, which was told to me by another visitor; so I must leave the parson alone. Here is the story. A preacher on the streets of Glasgow was one day engaged in the common exercise of street preachers—he was telling how bad a man he was before his conversion—when something landed on his nose. Quoth the man of God: "Now just let me illustrate my point by this fly which has landed on my nose. So wicked was I in former times that even so small a thing as this led to the uttering of an oath; but now, by the grace of God, I can remove it quietly like this—[here he raised his hand to his face and the insect at once moved on to his forefinger. He drew his hand down quickly and screamed out] "Oh, hell and damnation! It's a wasp." Tableau.

R. M. R.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF A JUVENILE APPEARANCE.

A young clergyman had gone to supply the vacant pulpit of the church in a Midland village. He was just out of the theological seminary, and had an extremely boyish appearance. A little before the hour, the new minister made his way almost unnoticed into the pulpit, where he was concealed from view by the reading-desk in front of him. But an old lady, who sat close on the right of the pulpit, in consideration of her deafness, was much concerned to see a boy in the place of the expected clergyman. So she arose very softly, stepped on tip-toe to the pulpit stairs, and, beckoning with her finger, whispered loudly, in coaxing accents—"Come down, my boy. You mustn't sit there. That's the place for the minister!"

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

The less men know, the more they believe that they know. Belief passes in their minds for knowledge, and the very circumstances which should beget doubt produce increase of faith. Every glittering apparition that is pointed out to them in the vast wild of imagination passes for a reality; and the more distant, the more confused, the more incomprehensible it is, the more sublime it is esteemed. He who should attempt to shift these scenes of airy vision for those of real knowledge might expect to be treated with scorn and anger by the whole theological and metaphysical tribe, the masters and the scholars; he would be despised as a plebeian philosopher, and failed at as an infidel.—*Lord Bolingbroke.*

JEWISH CREDULITY, CAVILS AND KABBALAH.

If any one wants his fill of credulity and superstition he must read Hebrew commentaries, or study the Hebrew Kabbalah. Christian commentaries sometimes run them very close, but for downright absurdity they can hardly beat God's chosen people. Perhaps no greater nonsense can be found anywhere than the directions in the Bible (Numbers v) as to the trial by ordeal for jealousy, but the Rabbins have elaborated even Bible superstition. Jesus believed in devils, but one of the Rabbis gives directions how to raise them. "Whoever wishes to see them, let him take the interior covering of a black cat, the daughter of a first-born black cat, which is also the daughter of a first-born, and let him burn it in the fire, and pulverise it, and then fill his eyes with it and he will see them" (Berachoth, fol. 6 col 1). Very likely.

The order of Moses that the man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath should be stoned alive was atrocious. The Rabbis are only absurd. In the Mishnah you may read how Rabbi Meir allows a man to wear his wooden leg on the Sabbath, while R. Joseph forbids this at any price. One man carrying a loaf breaks the Sabbath, but two carrying it between them do not. When a drop of milk falls into a pot of meat, unless the meat is more than sixty times the size of the drop it must not be eaten.

Deep students of the Kabbalah know that Satan and the Messiah are one and the same. The way to prove it is by the science of *Gematria*. The numerical value of the letters m, sh, h is 358, which is also the numerical value of n, ch, sh, a serpent, by which Satan is to be understood—Q.E.D.

From the letters of the word Adam, A, D, M, being the beginning of the names Adam, David, and Messiah, it is evident that the soul of Adam passed into David, and then transmigrated on into the Messiah!

It is well-known that in the passage in Judges xviii., 30, the name of Manasseh was substituted for that of Moses, to conceal the fact that the priests of the silver image at Dan traced their descent to the great law-giver. The scribes were in a strait. Either they must disregard the integrity of their sacred scriptures or they must admit the damning evidence that Moses was the grandfather of an idolater. They therefore invented a theory that the spirit of God influenced the writer of Judges to insert the letter *n* between the *m* and *s*, but the spirit did not permit the *n* to be written in a straight line among the rest of the letters but suspended above, so that it may be for ever doubtful whether the word is to be read Msh or Mnsh, Moses or Manasseh.

LUCIANUS.

CAUSE FOR THANKFULNESS.

In the Theatre Royal, Dublin, when the Italian Company came to play "Faust," the actor who took the part of Mephistopheles neglected to try the size of the trap-door by which he was supposed to descend into the infernal regions. His figure, which "he had not lost, but which had gone before," was too large for the opening, and at the supreme moment he discovered he could not get down above his waist. To heighten the awkwardness of the situation, and to relieve the strained feelings of the audience, one of the gods in the gallery, in a rich Irish brogue, exclaimed, "Begorra! hell's full."—*Harper's Magazine.*

NOT FIT FOR PARADISE.

A poor Catholic, having been released from the cares of this world, and from a scurry wife, presented himself at the gates of paradise.

"Have you been through purgatory?" asked St. Peter.

"No; but I have been married," he replied, seriously.

"Come in, then, it's all the same."

At this moment arrived another man, just defunct, who begged of St. Peter to be permitted to go in also. "Softly, softly! have you been through purgatory?"

"No; but what of that? Did you not admit, a moment ago, one who had not been there any more than I?"

"Certainly; but he has been married."

"Married! Who are you talking to? I have been married twice."

"Oh, pshaw!" replied St. Peter; "get away; paradise is not for fools!"

KISS THE BOOK.

At a recent naval court of inquiry much unconscious humor was exhibited. The sailors called as witnesses were quite unused to such proceedings, and went about their work very much as a Sioux Indian might be expected to conjugate a Greek verb.

One of them—Bill Bubbles—came shuffling forward, his eyes hunting all round the room, as if in search of some place of safety.

"Come here," said the admiral.

He came, of course, upon the wrong side.

"No, here! What's your name?"

"Bubbles."

"What's all of it?"

"Bill Bubbles."

"Bill Bubbles, take the book."

"Book, sir?"

"Yes, here."

The admiral stood up, placed his eye glasses astride of his nose, peered through them at the unhappy Bubbles, and held out the Bible. Bubbles made a motion as if to take the Bible, perhaps thinking it a gratuity.

"No, no! just place your hand on it."

Bubbles put up his left hand.

"No, your right hand."

Bubbles put up both hands,

The admiral seized the left one between his thumb and finger and removed it.

The right remained.

"Now, Bubbles."

"Yez'r."

"Do you solemnly swear that the evidence you will give in this case shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"

"Yez'r."

"Well, then, kiss the book."

"Hey, zur?"

"Kiss the book."

"Kiss it, zur?"

"Yes, kiss it."

Bubbles looked around appealingly, but there seemed to be no help for it, so he placed himself squarely on his feet, drew a long breath, bent over the Bible, and produced a noise which made the admiral jump.

For an instant, the Bible seemed to be in peril, and the admiral rescuing it with a sudden pull, looked sternly at Bubbles, and said slowly: "Go yonder and sit down."

THE PREACHER AND ASS.

A FABLE.

A preacher met an ass one day
With a load of carrots by the way;
A bunch was dangling on his nose
To make him draw you may suppose.
The preacher smiled, and thus he spoke:
"Dear friend this is beyond a joke,
To toil for some degraded sot;
Your's is indeed an hopeless lot.
And then to aggravate your woes
He dangles carrots on your nose;
For well he knows you cannot catch 'em
A donkey's part is just to fetch 'em."
"Your sympathy I reciprocate,"
Replied the ass, "for such is fate;
Man thinks his prospects all so bright,
Yet he's the ass's prototype.
What are your mansions in the sky?
Why man alive, they're all my eye;
To think you'll get them when you're dead,
Why, sir, how very soft your head!
Like me, you're valued for your labor.
Now, pray don't turn so rusty, neighbor!
Just count the ass's vices o'er—
Conceited man has ten times more;
Now o'er his virtues gently run,
You'll find the ass has every one:
Submission that for virtue passes
Is valued both in men and asses;
And all the treasures priestcraft shows
But carrots on a donkey's nose;
Your fiery torture but a thong
To whip the drudging serf along."
"Bon jour," replies the priest, "adieu,
I fear your story is too true."

J. SAUNDERS.

ACID DROPS.

David Jones was a Welsh bard and a prominent Methodist. He was also secretary of the Nant Padar Building Society. During his life he was so popular that no one could safely say a word against him. But now he is dead it is discovered that he robbed the Society of £11,500, and covered his crime by means of a forged set of pass-books. The pious thief is beyond the reach of punishment, and the £11,500, has gone to Davy Jones's locker.

David Jones was a Calvinistic Methodist. No doubt he thought himself one of the elect, prede-tined to glory, and felt sure his theft and forgery would not annul the eternal decrees of God. Very likely he died in a vision of angels and harps, with a little smoke curling up from the pit, where the poor devils were roasting who had the misfortune to be honest but damned.

Henry Devlin was executed in Glasgow Gaol on Tuesday morning for the murder of his wife. Being a Catholic he was attended by Father Clifford. An altar was erected in his cell and Mass was said at 7 o'clock. After this the Sacrament was administered, and Devlin was hung with the body of Christ inside him. We presume he is now in heaven, while the wife he murdered is perhaps in hell. Oh what a beautiful creed.

The Bishop of Sodor and Man has been lecturing at Douglas on Science and the Bible. In regard to the Deluge he says he does not believe it was universal as regards the area of the world. When the writer says it covered "all the mountains under heaven" that meant all the mountains he saw. When he speaks of all animals being brought into the ark he means all in that district. Is the Bishop not aware that a flood which covered Mount Ararat would be practically univer-al? Nor could specimens of all the animals in Asia Minor have lived in the ark without a miracle.

The Bi-hop appeals for confirmation of the tale in Genesis to the Chaldean Tablets. This is rather rich. Those tablets admittedly represent stories far older than the times of Moses, and scholars are undecided as to whether these stories have any historical value or are purely mythical. Any way, there is no evidence that the Jews knew anything of a flood before they went to Babylon, after which they probably copied the Babylonian legends.

A writer in the *Figaro* is giving "Recollections of the Empress Eugénie." It seems the Empre-s is very superstitious. In 1870 a little before the *plébescite*, as she went out from Mass one Sunday she opened the Bible at random and put her finger on a verse. Reading it, she exclaimed "We shall have a magnificent success." The success came but it meant irretrievable disaster.

This method of divining was common among the early Methodists and is amusingly referred to by Bishop Lavington in his *Enthusiasm of Methodists*. In ancient times all forms of lottery were supposed to be under the superintendence of deity in accordance with the text of Proverbs which says "the lot is in the hand of the Lord." The superstition of telling fortunes by the Bible and a key still lingers in some parts of England.

A member of a certain fashionable church who spoke of her pastor irreverently as "the apostle to the g-n-teels," remarked once after a particularly doctrinal sermon, that if Mr. Blank preached restitution instead of repentance he would preach to empty pews.

Since the Supreme Court of Wisconsin decided that Bible-reading was illegal in the Public Schools, the question of religious education has become a burning one in the United States, where the Catholics are doing their utmost to upset the public school system. The question of Bible reading will be referred to the Supreme Court of the Union. We should like to hear that Col. Ingersoll has been engaged to argue it.

Freethought, says "Czar Alexander is the best living likeness of the orthodox deity."

Celestine Edwards, the negro preacher, has been lecturing at Sunderland. While he was holding forth in the Assembly Hall on "Christianity and Labor," an enterprising person, who was apparently a laborer and probably a Christian, stole into the ante-room and appropriated the lecturer's hat and overcoat.

How "converted infidels" are made.—A man who was never a member of any Secular Society, but has been frequently assisted by the Benevolent Committee, met Mr. Forder the other day, and said to him, "Ah, you won't help me any more, eh? Well, if you don't give me something, I shall go over to the other side. When the man does "go over" we shall draw attention to this paragraph and connect his name with it.

The Licensed Victuallers' Mirror is a pious as well as a beery organ. One of its contributors pours out the vials of his wrath on the "infidels" who "defy God" in Hyde Park. We hope this forcible-feeble writer has received his pot of ale; it would be too much to hope he has received his cheque.

According to the *Glasgow Evening News*, the ordination at Cumbernauld Parish Church was honored by a special license to keep the pubs. open till midnight. Ordaining is evidently a thirsty business.

The Rev. H. W. Majendie, vicar of Torre, says there is no doubt the evil spirit of unbelief and rebellion against religion is spreading and increasing alarmingly, and will continue to spread and increase. He seems to attribute it to the Board schools, and perhaps he is not very far wrong.

Samuel Maxwell, a waiter at Lockhart's rooms, Brompton Road, and a member of the Salvation Army, has been sentenced to three months' hard labor for robbery from his employer.

The Codex Bezae, a very ancient manuscript of the New Testament at Cambridge, contains no less than 13,281 variations from the ordinary text. When God took the trouble to inspire the writers, he ought at the same time to have inspired the copyists and thus saved theologians from wrangling over various readings of the divine word.

The Swiss government have frankly owned that the story of William Tell is a myth, and have ordered that the narrative shall be expunged from the school-books. This although the myth brings visitors and money to Switzerland. When will Christians be equally honest with Bible myths?

German Catholics, having the balance of Power in the Reichstag, are becoming importunate for further concessions. They demand the re-establishment in Germany of all the Catholic orders, including the Jesuits, Government aid for Catholic missions in German Africa, and the restoration of the Pope's temporal power. Meanwhile the Government is adopting a course of petty persecution towards the German Freethinkers, who are the only party able to neutralise the efforts of the Catholics and keep them in check.

The Bishop of Ballarat, Victoria, has offered an insult to the Y.M.C.A., which nothing but gore will ever wipe out. He states that he wants to have no connection with that body "if its effects were simply to create young females of the male sex, and though he liked to see the youths put off, as the Scripture said, the old man, he did not wish them to put on the old woman." *The Sydney Bulletin*, which reports this hard saying of the Bishop's, adds: "The boneless young person with the heavenly smile and the inch of white sock showing between his pants and his shoes is so mad at this that he has risen with his umbrella in one hand and his golosh in the other, and has asked in a small voice for an explanation. And if he doesn't get it the chances are that he will let his carnal passions loose and inform his mother about it."—*Star*.

The men of God are to be exempt from the law which prohibits the importation of contract labor into the United States. They do not come to labor, but to prey.

A writer in the *Weston-super-Mare Gazette* says: "About three years ago a meeting was held of the church-members of a certain well-known church, not twenty miles from Weston, composed mostly too of business men, and the question was raised and discussed, after due notice given, 'Whether it is, or is not, possible—in the present state of the commercial world—to observe the precepts of Christianity, and to succeed in business?' And a majority of votes decided that it was 'impossible'!"

The Rev. Peter Mackenzie is a curiosity, if the report of the *Rochdale Observer* is trustworthy. The *R. O.* calls him "the Com'c Man of Methodism," and says he often speaks at the rate of 300 words a minute. Perhaps this may account for his being made to compare the historical books of the Bible with "all the old masters, Turner and the rest of them." "Noah," he said, "was the most successful financier that ever lived. He successfully launched a limited liability company when the whole world was in a state of liquidation. Talk about limited companies! That was the successful company! Then there was Abraham and the prophets; he could not enumerate them all—they must buy a catalogue!" This is the sort of thing that goes down with Wesleyans now. What would John Wesley say, could he listen for a moment to such folly?

The Rev. E. Lloyd Jones has recently had what he considers a little angel in the form of a baby girl, and is consequently annoyed with a Darlington clergyman who stated that every babe born into the world was a little devil until it was baptised. The Darlington clergyman relies on the fact that Jesus prescribed baptism as a condition of salvation. The logical outcome of this belief is the form of baptism mentioned in *Tristram Shandy*, for five minutes' delay on the part of a minister might mean the damnation of another soul in eternal hell.

R. D. C. Cordeaux, the solicitor of Hull who hanged himself last week, left a note, saying, "God forgive me for this rash act." Evidently no Atheist.

The Rev. Burham Pegg, Principal of Bath House College, Twickenham, seems to be a follower of the late unlamented Mr. Squeers, of Dotheboys Hall. In an action brought against him for breach of contract, evidence was given that children were reduced to a woefully emaciated condition by the bad diet and ill-treatment. The soup was like vinegar and the meat often bad. Mrs. Pegg, like Mrs. Squeers, dosed the boys with brimstone and treacle. The jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff for the full amount claimed, and the judge awarded full costs against the Rev. Squeers Pegg.

An enthusiastic believer was relating to a sceptic spiritual performances to which he could testify, and among other things said that on a certain occasion the spirit of his wife, who had been dead several years, returned to him, and, seating herself upon his knee, put her arms around him, and kissed him as much to his gratification as she used to do when living. "You do not mean to say," remarked the sceptic, "that the spirit of your wife really embraced you and kissed you?" "No, not exactly that," replied the believer, "but her spirit took possession of the body of a female medium, and through her embraced and kissed me."

A New York telegram announces that one hundred negroes have been poisoned in Dallas Co. Texas, through eating arsenical pork. The old Jew upstairs must have lost his temper at seeing pious people partake of the unclean animal.

The *Times* of Tuesday devotes an article to the artistic training of the working man, yet never mentions the obvious fact that this would be best obtained by giving workmen the opportunity of studying the works of art on their one day of leisure. A writer in the *Daily News* points out that in Paris the picture galleries and museum are open on Sunday but closed on Monday, when the attendants have their day of rest. The enjoyment of the many is thus promoted at the least sacrifice to the few.

The Rev. W. E. Sellers, of the Wesleyan Church, Willesden, spoke a lot of nonsense in preaching to the Temperance

and Friendly Society. He said, for instance, that "All charitable institutions were the creation of Christianity." He is evidently unaware that philanthropy is a Greek word, in use in the days of Plato, and that hospitals existed among the Egyptians a thousand years before Jesus is said to have cured the blind by clay and spittle; omitting to leave the secret of his success to any successors.

The floods in Austria and Hungary have been terrible in their severity, but they have been dwarfed into insignificance by those in China, where it is reported that four millions of people have been washed out of house and home.

Cyclones in America, gales and shipwrecks in the China seas, famine at Suakim, increase of cholera in Spain, barley as well as potato blight in Ireland, a plague of devastating locusts in Rajputana (India), and a plague of rats in Lincolnshire, may afford food for meditation to pious optimists whose creed is "He doeth all things well."

The number of deaths among cattle arising from snake-bites in India was, according to the last yearly census, upwards of 68,000. This may be all very well for the snakes, but it is rather hard on the cattle and their owners.

The Rev. Wm. F. Pettit, a prominent Methodist minister of Lafayette, Indiana, is charged with poisoning his wife, but has been let out on bail of ten thousand dollars.

Holy Russia is maintaining her reputation. Those who refuse to join the orthodox Church are persecuted in various ways. A number of German settlers have been expelled for declining to change their religion.

An inquest was held on Monday at Listowel on the body of Mr. Marum, M.P., who died suddenly in church on Sunday. The jury, after hearing medical evidence, returned a verdict of heart disease. Suppose Mr. C. Bradlaugh, M.P., were to die in a Secular Hall on a Sunday. What a hollabalu there would be in religious circles!

The editor of the *Spectator* cannot understand how the idea of ghosts could arise if there was no actuality to give rise to it. Evidently the editor has not read Dr. E. B. Tylor's work on *Primitive Culture*, or he would surely have no difficulty in seeing that dreams were mainly responsible for a belief that is contributed to in savage minds by shadows and reflections. The return of the sun and the stars is also found in early religions to be associated with the return of the dead. The Christian doctrine of the resurrection of Christ is founded on the earlier resurrection of sun-gods.

The story of the gorilla acting as signalman on a railway at Naval calls up the statement of Mr. Anderson, in his *Twenty-five Years in a Waggon*, of the Bushman who assured him he could both talk to the baboons and understand what they said. What does Mr. Romanes say?

A correspondent of a Church paper says that at a church in the suburbs of Hull the vicar has a stipend of £50 per annum for each person in his congregation. Yet his stipend is only £200.

Prophet Baxter is down again. He found that Boulanger's name made the number (666) of the Beast, and prophesied great things for him. But Boulanger is now as dead (politically) as a shotten herring, and Prophet Baxter will have to find another Beast. This is the sixth or seventh time he has been mistaken, but his dupes are not easily undeceived, and he comes up smiling after every fiasco.

Woman tells this story of the late Canon Liddon. During his travels in the East he was so pleased with his dragoman that he gave him a large amount of backsheesh. Two days later the happy dragoman called on Canon Liddon and exhibited the new wife he had bought with the Englishman's money. It was like the good old patriarchal times again.

Canon Liddon is to have a memorial. Fifty years hence who will remember him except the readers of old-fashioned

theology? Sensible folk will soon be obliged to suggest that a man should be dead ten years before there is any talk of perpetuating his memory.

Mr. Ben Tillett is not to address the Church Congress after all. He is not a member of the English Church, and the Committee find it is against the rules for an outsider to speak at their annual palaver. We hope Ben Tillett will use this illustration of charity the next time he occupies a Christian pulpit.

It is admitted by the *Speaker* that the Ticino revolution was largely brought about by the clericalism which "has nothing in common with good government." The fundamental principle of the Republic was flouted because it threatened to destroy clerical supremacy.

On Sunday a collection was made for the poor old Pope in all the Catholic churches of county Limerick. Many of the principal townsmen of Newcastle West put nothing in the box as a protest against the action of Bishop O'Dwyer who is to carry the money to Rome. Father Hurley, the parish priest, referred to the matter at Mass, and said "God help the Catholicity of those who would not contribute a mite to the Vicar of Christ!"

Irishmen are saying "We won't take our politics from Rome." By and bye they will say, "We won't take our religion from Rome."

A pious league of Sabbatarians has been started by some American sky-pilots, with the object of protesting against the opening of the World's Fair on Sunday at Chicago in 1892. The members of the League vow not to go to Chicago or make any purchases from the Exhibition if it is opened on Sundays. They will probably only succeed in showing how insignificant Sabbatarians are becoming.

The Blood of Christ question has been agitating at Marseilles. There is a church in that city, Notre Dame de la Garde, where the young priests have to go through the celebration of the Mass about every ten minutes between seven in the morning and noon. The wine which is used is poor, sour stuff, and the priests complained that it injured their health. Accordingly the Pope was asked to let them tone up the Blood of Christ with brandy, and after a full discussion the request has been granted, but the alcohol found in the wine must not exceed 12 per cent. We congratulate the Marseilles priests, and hope that the Blood of Christ will henceforth agree with them.

Now that slavery is on its last legs the Catholic Church is carrying on a vigorous crusade against it. Cardinal Lavigerie is thundering away with the Pope's blessing, and has managed to assemble an Anti-Slavery Congress at Paris. The complexion of this Congress is purely clerical. Jules Simon is the only Republican who gives it any support. Victor Schœlcher, the aged Atheist and Republican, whose life and fortune have been devoted to the cause of emancipation, would not countenance this Catholic dodge to gain a little cheap popularity.

M. Keller, the president of the Congress, made a number of extraordinary statements, which were well received, however, by the clerical anti-slavers. He said that one of the three wise men from the East, who visited the cradle of Christ, was a black man. He also declared that Mohammedanism had introduced both slavery and polygamy as sacred institutions. But every reader of the Koran knows that it regulates slavery just as the Old Testament does; and that while, like the Jew Book, it sanctions polygamy, it lays down regulations that are far juster to women than those which are found in the Old Testament.

LITTLE TOMMY.

A mother who had lost one of her little darlings had the following epitaph inscribed on his tombstone:

We cannot have everything to please us;
Little Tommy's gone to Jesus.

A wit added this couplet:

Fear not, dear friends, all may yet be well;
Perhaps little Tommy's gone to hell.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 28, at the Alhambra Music Hall, Porter Street, Hull; at 10.30, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; at 2.30, "Heaven and Hell"; at 6.30, "A World Without God."

October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.
November 2, Nelson; 9, Grimbsay; 30, Leicester.
December 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

J. CLOSE.—The suggestion has been made before. We may see our way to adopt it.

H. M.—Too long for a joke. Brevity is the soul of wit.

J. F. HENLEY.—Explanations do not alter facts. When the girl let the baby fall and broke its leg, it was a poor consolation that she never did it before. Mr. Smith said the chairman did not arrive in Hyde Park on Sept. 14. You say he did, but the two gentlemen did not know each other. But surely they had *tongues*. Couldn't they inquire? Might not your chairman have asked "Is Mr. Smith here?" We were not wrong in saying that such a fiasco was inexcusable, though we mean no offence to you personally, or to others not responsible.

J. P. SILKSTONE.—Mr. Foote has written to the secretary of the Branch for an explanation. Thanks.

R. M.—We are unable to tell you who was Cain's father-in-law. We should guess, "Adam or the Devil."

A. J. (West Ham).—Colenso's *Arithmetic* is a good one. What do you mean by Reading Books? What subjects do you wish to study?

W. HOLLAND.—Mr. Foote would be glad to visit Manchester more frequently, but there are so many other places that desire his services.

H. BORLAND.—The "Thirty Converted Infidels" tract has been exposed again and again. Thomas Cooper did go back to Christianity and so did Joseph Barker—both a great many years ago; but most of the other cases are false, and the rest are insignificant persons who were in no sense "leaders" of Freethought. Glad to hear your Branch is progressing.

W. GILMOUR.—Thanks. We dealt with the Primmer-Argyll correspondence last week.

E. S. DAY.—Jokes are always welcome.

E. COX.—If you want to challenge Mr. Standring you should write him direct. Why write to us?

S. STANDRING.—Thanks for the memorandum.

J. H. ARTHUR.—(1) St. Paul (1 Galatians iii.) reckons 430 years from the covenant with Abraham to the giving of the Law after the Exodus. This agrees with Josephus, who gives 215 years from Abraham to the going down of Jacob into Egypt, and 215 from that to the Exodus. This chronology is accepted by nearly all the commentators. The passage in Exodus (xii, 40, 41) is ambiguous, and the commentators say that the 430 years refer to the sojourning, not to the dwelling in Egypt. You may be sure that Mr. Foote has good grounds for all his statements in *Bible Romances*. (2) You should remember that there is such a thing as being too solemn. If you press the thing literally Sunday means the Sun's Day (*dies solis*), and is a pre-Christian celebration. Of course the Jewish Sunday (to use the word generically) was the Sabbath; but who could be misled by a colloquial phrase on such a subject?

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—C. B., 10s.; surplus on Excursion, North-West London Branch, 2s. 7d.; Finsbury Branch, 10s.; Wood Green Branch, 5s.; Brighton Branch (2nd subscription), 4s. 6d.; Hyde Park Branch, 6s.—R. FORDER.

T. DUNBAR.—It is always pleasant to hear from those we have been instrumental in converting to Freethought.

C. B.—The Benevolent Fund is administered most carefully by a Special Committee, which does its work gratuitously. Subscribers may rely on every penny going to deserving persons.

A. J. FIELD.—We daresay Finsbury Park will be quiet enough henceforth.

FREETHINKER.—The statement that Celestine Edwards has silenced the Secularists in Hyde Park is a silly falsehood. See our Lecture Guide every week for the work of the Hyde Park Branch, which it one of the most active in London.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Menschenthum—Freidenker—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Lichtfreund—Echo—Star—Cape Argus—Finsbury Park Journal—South Eastern Herald—Redcar Gazette—Rochdale Observer—Hull Daily News—Weston-Super-Mare Gazette—Willesden Herald—Sporting Life—St. Pancras Guardian—Individualist—Manx Sun—Exeter Evening Post.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's audiences on Sunday were the largest he has ever had in the Manchester Secular Hall. The heat was intense in the evening, owing to the crowded state of the place, and the atmosphere told on the lecturer afterwards. The chief opponent was the Rev. Mr. Collier.

The Manchester Branch has been very successful with its open-air meetings. The lectures are listened to attentively, and a great deal of literature is distributed. Altogether the prospect in Manchester is brightening.

One Freethinker travelled sixty miles to hear Mr. Foote on Sunday. There are only two or three "saints" in the part he came from, but they get the *Freethinker* and circulate Secular literature in that benighted district.

Mr. Foote opened the course of Free Lectures at the Hall of Science on Thursday, Sept. 18. Despite the rain there was a good audience. There were three opponents—of a sort! Why cannot the Christians send decent representatives of their faith?

A very intelligent-looking young man spoke to Mr. Foote after the lecture. He had been told by an orthodox friend not to go and hear Mr. Foote who was "a low vulgar beast." He did come though, and was "agreeably disappointed." He enjoyed the lecture, and was resolved to study our side of the question.

Mr. G. Standring is down to deliver the second lecture of this Free Course on Thursday, Sept. 25, his subject being "A Defence of Secularism." Mr. Forder follows on Thursday, Oct. 2, on "Christian Legends," and Mr. Foote winds up on Thursday, Oct. 9.

A small meeting was held at Anderton's Hotel on Wednesday evening, September 17, to form a Committee to agitate for the legalisation of bequests for Freethought purposes. Mr. G. J. Holyoake presided, and made a brief speech on the object of the meeting. A committee was then formed, with power to add to its number. Mr. Foote was asked to become a member, but could give no promise before consulting his colleagues on the N.S.S. A most capable secretary was secured in Mr. H. L. Brækstad. The Committee is issuing a circular, and further operations will soon be undertaken.

The Camberwell Branch is re-opening its Science Classes under the conduct of Mr. Coppock. Full particulars will be found in our advertisement columns.

Mr. Martin Weatherburn hopes to form a Branch at Blyth. The Freethought movement is spreading in the Tyneside district.

George Standring sends the following note: "I lectured last Sunday morning at Finsbury Park. The audience was a pretty large one, and, with the exception of a few trifling verbal interruptions, everything went smoothly. There was no discussion. After the lecture, a person put a question *sotto voce*, and, as he appeared too bashful to mount the platform, I stated his question and replied to it. This too modest Christian subsequently engaged me in a conversational debate, still displaying the outward signs of a timid inquirer. In a short time the circle of listeners increased, and my modest friend threw off the disguise he had assumed. He was supported by the empty laughter of a few boys who would have been more appropriately employed in eating sweetstuff than in jeering at a Freethought advocate. The modest Christian put on the offensive armor of his tribe, and, as soon as I discovered his true character, I left him to his own devices, remarking that, as he had been too cowardly to meet me upon the platform, I would not expose myself to his insults under other conditions. I afterwards learned from a Freethought friend that there had been a disposition evinced to cause a disturbance by hustling on the outskirts of the audience; but, for some reason or another, the attempt was abandoned."

Mr. A. B. Moss reports a success in Finsbury Park on Sunday afternoon. He had a large and attentive audience. Freethinkers came in strong force to support the platform.

We see from the *St. Pancras Guardian* that Miss Vance delivered an effective little speech at the meeting called to consider the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Fitzgerald, vicar of Camden Town. There is plenty of room for lady speakers on our platform just now, and it is to be hoped they will come forward in the cause of mental emancipation, which is indeed the cause of woman.

The Boston *Record* prints this paragraph: "Mrs. Robert G. Ingersoll is the recipient of countless tracts, Church prints, leaflets and religious publications embracing every modern creed. The senders evidently have one shrewd point in mind—believing firmly that if they can reach Mrs. Ingersoll successfully, she can be depended upon to win over the eloquent Robert." The senders might as well spare themselves the trouble and save their postage. Mrs. Ingersoll is altogether too kind-hearted to ever become a Christian, and too big-brained to heed their tracts. She knows already all that the Church can say, and she does not feel the more kindly toward it for its persistent, scurrilous, spiteful and idiotic abuse of Colonel Ingersoll. When the Church gets Mrs. Ingersoll away from her husband, the heavens will collapse—and there doesn't seem to be any immediate danger of that.—*Truthseeker*

The *Cambria Daily Leader* reproduces our recent paragraphs on Mr. Ben Tillett and his funny religion.

The Russian ministry has accorded to the district assemblies of the government of Ekaterinoslov permission to open book-stores in all the villages in which there may be a demand for reading matter, under the condition that no other publications be kept for sale than such as the secular and the religious censors may approve. But the *Grazhdanin*, a daily paper of St. Petersburg, takes exceptions to that measure. "It is unwise," says that paper, "to put dangerous weapons in the hands of the people. Bookstores once opened for the common people will in a short time be turned by the Liberals into weapons against the government, and the disintegration of the national spirit will be wrought. Of course no other books but such as the censor approves are desired at present. The people need at first only stories of Russian heroes and patriot warriors. But in a short time they will begin reading the editorials of newspapers and get into the habit of reasoning about current events. Then they will become acquainted with Mill, Lassalle, and other writers of the kind. Within five or six years the Liberalistic propaganda will find means to distribute among them books and papers of the most dangerous tendencies." So mote it be!

The Italians in London met in Freemasons' Tavern, on Monday, Sept. 22nd, to celebrate the abrogation of the Pope's temporal power on Sept. 20, 1870.

In 1845, a German pastor named Wislicenus made a considerable stir by a Rationalistic pamphlet entitled *Letter or Spirit?* This was made the occasion of deposing him from the ministry and he became the founder of the Free Congregations in Germany, most of whom are decided Freethinkers. Dr. T. Voelkel of Magdeberg, has now reissued the pamphlet with an historical introduction.

Charles Robert Newman, the brother of Cardinal Newman and Francis William Newman, the Theist, was a real reasoning Atheist. Several papers from his pen appeared in the columns of the *Reasoner*, though as far as we can ascertain he published no works on theology. These papers should be worthy of republication. The three brothers began as Evangelical Protestants, curiously exemplifying the tendencies of the age away from Protestantism.

During October the platform of the London Hall of Science will be occupied by Mr. Foote. The subjects of his lectures will be announced in our next.

Mr. Bradlaugh will lecture at the London Hall of Science in November. On the Sunday mornings he will restate his political and social programme, and on the Sunday evening's his theological position.

Messrs. Bentley and Co. announce a *Life of Thoreau*, by Mr. H. S. Salt, author of the *Life of James Thomson (B.V.)*

Our old contributor, Mr. W. P. Ball, has long been working on a scientific treatise. We see it is announced among

"forthcoming books" by Macmillan and Co. The title is "Are the Effects of Use and Disuse Inherited?" The social implications of this question are of transcendent importance. Mr. Ball takes the negative view.

Now the open-air lecture stations are closing, and the winter season with its long evening approaches, we venture to make a fresh appeal to our friends to promote the circulation of this journal. If three or four hundred friends would take extra copies (one, two, or more) for a few weeks, and put them into orthodox hands, it would procure us many new readers and some fresh subscribers.

More than a hundred thousand of "Freethinker Tracts" have been sent out from our office, and probably most of them are in circulation.

THE POWER OF SUPERSTITION.

In the Rev. John Heckewelden's *History, Manners and Customs of the Indian Natives*, a good instance is given of the force of human credulity. The Indian tribes universally believed in the power of sorcerers to inflict evil by means of magic. Some time ago a Quaker trader named John Anderson, who among the Indians was called "the honest Quaker trader," after vainly endeavoring to convince them that there was no such thing as witchcraft, desired that two of their magicians might be brought before him on different days, and try by their spells to do him whatever harm they could. The Indians tried at first to dissuade him from so dangerous an experiment; but he persisted, and they acceded to his demand. A medicine man was brought, but, knowing Anderson, he said he was so good and honest that he could not think of doing him an injury. The Indians found this excuse perfectly good, and were more than ever convinced of this man's power from his refusal to exercise it.

Another was discovered of a different stamp. He was an arch-sorcerer, dreaded for his power and malevolence. Every effort was made to dissuade Mr. Anderson from the ordeal. But he was firm in his purpose, and only stipulated that the magician, who boasted that he could kill his enemies at the distance of one hundred miles, should remain at the distance of about twelve feet. A reward was exhibited, to be given to the magician if he succeeded.

The spectators being assembled, the sorcerer took his place, arrayed in the most frightful manner he could devise. Anderson stood firm and composed at the stipulated distance. The wizard began his incantations, working his fingers on his blanket, plucking now and then a little wool, breathing on it and using other spells to which the power of bewitching is ascribed. All this had no effect on Anderson, who remained calm, now and then calling on his antagonist not to be sparing of his exertions. The conjurer began to make the most horrid gestures, and used all the means in his power to frighten the Quaker, who remained unmoved. At length the magician was obliged to desist from exhaustion and alleged for his excuse that the white men eat too much salt provisions; that salt had a powerful repulsive effect, which made the powerful invisible substance that he employed recoil upon him; that the Indians, who eat but little salt, had often felt the effects of this substance, but that the great quantity of it which the white men used had effectually protected them against it.

The imposition of the sorcerer's pretence was palpable. Yet the Indians refused to discredit him. They firmly believed that the salt which the white man used was the only cause of his failure in this instance, and if it had not been for the salted meat Mr. Anderson fed upon, he would have fallen a victim as well as others to the incantations of this impostor.

The story well illustrates the tenacity with which the credulous adhere to their superstitions, and will doubtless suggest somewhat similar experiences between Freethinkers and the orthodox.

THE reign of superstition begins to yield to a religion of reason and humanity. The first forerunners of that religion appeared at the end of the sixteenth century, when the philosophers of northern Europe first dared to appeal from dogma to nature, and since that revival of common sense the prison walls of clerical obscurantism have been shaken by shock after shock, till daylight now enters through a thousand fissures.—*Prof. Oswald.*

WHY JUDAS SUICIDED.

Two thousand years are nearly fled
 Since J. C. through the country led
 A dozen Hebrews, hopeless cranks,
 To witness his fantastic pranks;
 To help him drink his home-made wine,
 And see him slay the farmers' swine,
 To hear him brag of being king
 And see him dance the highland fling
 Upon the Galilean sea;
 And take the tax collector's fee
 From out a fresh-caught haddock's gill,
 And quite a crowd of people fill
 With some young sprats a boy had got
 Alive within a gallipot;
 To see him still the angry wave
 And dig a dead man from his grave;
 And many other tricks he played
 That puts good Moses in the shade.

One Judas catered for the lot,
 Collecting all the browns they got.
 No doubt they made a tidy screw,
 For who so lib'ral as a Jew?
 This Judas soon began to think
 J. C. too sharp about the chink,
 For ev'ry time they stumped a town
 He'd to account for ev'ry brown
 And give returns, to stop all doubt,
 How he had laid the money out.

At length it dawned upon his mind
 J. C. to boasting was inclined.
 He'd heard him crow that he was king,
 And part of God, or some such thing.
 Thought he, "'Twould be in vain to seek
 One who could match J. C. in cheek;
 Why, he was but a joiner lad—
 I knew him working with his dad;
 But now we hear him cracking on
 That he is God Almighty's son.
 I'll go and tell the Jewish priest
 Where he intends to hold the feast."

Then to the temple straight he went,
 On pocketing reward intent,
 Said he, "My lords, strange news I bring
 Of one who swears that he is king,
 And means, there can't be any doubt,
 To quickly drive the Romans out.
 If you're inclined to lock him up,
 I'll tell you where he's going to sup;
 But first, my lords, you understand
 I'd like a little cash in hand;
 For since I've served this bouncing bloke
 He's kept me fairly 'stoney broke.'"

"All right. Suppose we say a quid?
 No doubt the man is off his head;
 For if what you have told be true,
 There never was a madder Jew."
 "A quid! So help me God, my lords,
 I cannot understand your words.
 I sell my master, good and kind,
 Who heals the sick and cures the blind!
 You think my conscience made of steel!
 Two quid, or I am off the deal."
 They haggled long about the job,
 But closed at last for thirty bob.

As Judas toddled slowly home,
 He met by chance a former chum,
 And when the "how d'ye-does" were said
 They liquored at the "Jacob's Head."
 "Come," said the pal, "there's fifty bob
 I'll get you for your master's nob.
 A great phrenologist in town
 Will pay you ready money down
 If you will put him on the track
 Of this most famous maniac,
 For since he's learnt his subtle craft
 He loves the head of one that's daft."

Jude ran to call his bargain off;
 The judge received him with a laugh,
 And said, "My friend, it seems to me
 You're quite as cracked as poor J. C.
 Pick up your coin, you silly elf,
 And go away and hang yourself."
 Poor Judas, having lost a quid,
 Went forth and did as he was bid.

T. CLARK.

A SPLENDID FUTURE FOR THE AUTOMATIC MACHINES.

THE capabilities of the Automatic Machines for supplying almost anything is comparatively unlimited—from scenting your handkerchief to telling your fortune—so being of a kindly nature I sent the outcome of my careful thought to the Bishops and very Archbishops of the Church, showing them how a vast income could be made by manipulating these machines by an ecclesiastical syndicate for the benefit of the poor underpaid Bishops, etc., of the Established Church. They have not had the common courtesy to acknowledge even the receipt of my letters. My plan is this: The Syndicate to place Machines for Automatic Supply in all public places, where a penny put in the slot would produce a crust of bread and a short drink—wine or some blood-red liquid—the sacrament in fact—not too great a hunk of bread and of course no cheese, or of course the office boys would be making their dinner off their Savior at the small charge of a penny; whilst other machines could be worked for the purpose of baptism—when the penny is placed in the slot a spray of baptismal water would be squirted over the placer—warmed in winter and iced in summer. These three things: the bread, the wine, and the water could be blessed in bulk, and then employment could be given to the numerous hulking clergy seen walking about listlessly, in filling the receptacles daily with this holy food and these holy "goes" of cheap wine. As no notice has been taken of my money-making scheme, I write this to you, sir! feeling sure that with your usual impartiality you'll make it public in your very secular journal, and so not let this great idea drop silently into the great ocean of failures.

HUMANITAS.

THE FAT IN THE FIRE.

The Baptist community of Pretoria are greatly shocked with Mr. Statham, the editor of the *Transvaal Observer*, who has offended the proprieties beyond conception. It seems that on the invitation of the Rev. Mr. Cousins, Mr. Statham agreed to preach a sermon in the Baptist Church some three Sundays ago, and accordingly, on the day appointed, Mr. Statham duly occupied the pulpit. His sermon, however, was quite unorthodox, and wholly contrary to the teachings of the clergy. It was designed to show that Christ was not a divine being, and that the Bible was a mere fable. The principles that underlie thoughts of that nature may be either right or wrong, but to give expression to them in the pulpit of a church which is sacred to the utterances of faith, and where clergymen are accustomed to teach exactly opposite doctrines, is bad form altogether. As the local Christians are saying:—"Mr. Cousins planted, trained, and reared the tree of faith, and Mr. Statham stepped in, applied the axe cruelly to the root, and sought to eradicate it. Freethought is useful in its way, but it is quite out of place in the pulpit of a Christian Church, and if a gentleman accept an invitation to preach in such a sacred edifice, he practically intimates by his acceptance that he agrees with the tenets of that Church. To promise a clergyman to preach for him, and then to give a lecture on Freethought, is a breach of the proprieties which cannot be too highly censured." Shocking, to be sure!

PETER'S PENCE FOR 1889.—The sums received at Rome last year for Peter's pence are reported to have been as follows: From Austria, about £16,000; Spain, £8,000; France, £12,500; Germany, £7,200; Ireland £5,000; England, £3,800; Belgium, £6,200; Switzerland, £2,200; Poland, £3,400; North America, £7,400; South America, £12,400; Africa, £3,800; Asia, £4,000; Roumania, £4,000; Italy, £14,200, and Portugal, £6,000. Other sums, making up £4,000, were collected in Australia, Oceania, Russia, Sweden, Norway, etc. The whole sum received was about £120,000, being less by £6,000 than what was received in 1888. The European States which contributed nothing were Turkey, Montenegro, Greece, and Servia.

ANOTHER POLISE HERESY CASE.

MR. W. R. MORFILL reviews in the *Academy* a Polish work by Kraushara giving an account of "A Blasphemy Case in Poland in the Eighteenth Century." It appears that Sigsmund Unruh or Unrug (born at Miedzychod 1676), a Protestant noble of Obornik, and chamberlain to the king Augustus, was in 1715 accused of blasphemy. He kept a commonplace book in which was inserted a statement in French, to the effect that truth had not descended from heaven to the inhabitants of this globe to be a perpetual source of error, war, hatred and division. This was taken from *l'Esprit des Cours d'Europe* of Nicholas Gueudeville, of whom some account will be found in my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. Unruh was denounced, brought before the tribunal at Pietrokof, the birthplace of that good Freethinker Mrs. Rose, and was condemned to be burnt. Fortunately Unruh escaped to Germany, and his book alone was burnt. In 1726 his sentence was remitted and he died in 1732. This case may perhaps throw some light on that of Liszinski narrated in the *Freethinker* for Sept. 14.—J. M. W.

REVIEW.

Garrison in Heaven. A Dream by WILLIAM DENTON. First English edition, 1890. Manchester, E. W. Wallis, 10 Gt. Ducie Street. Price 3d.—This is an amusing skit on orthodoxy by the late W. F. Denton, the geologist and anti-Christian spiritist lecturer. It depicts Lloyd Garrison, the great Abolitionist, admitted to heaven because after death the ministers began to speak well of him; seeing all the menagerie of the apocalypse, but being dissatisfied because all his old familiar friends and fellow workers were down in hell. He then wanted to see Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Adams and Paine, but found they were all below, while he was expected to keep company with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samson, David and Calvin. At length Garrison takes up a corner as near to hell as he can possibly get, and expresses his determination to start an underground railway and run in every soul from that infernal pit.

PROFANE JOKES.

A drunken Scotchman was admonished by the parson thus: "I can go into the village and come home again without getting drunk." "Ah meenister, but I'm so popular," was the apologetic reply.

Vicar (reading from Book of Extracts): "What an elegant passage! I must use it in my sermons. Dear me no! It's from one of Zola's novels, and my congregation would recognise it."

The Holy Sabbath.—Bridgot: "The new neighbors next door wants to cut their grass, and they say as would you be so kind as to lend them your lawn-mower." Puritanical Mistress: "Lend my mower to cut grass on the Sabbath. Tell them we haven't got one."

A gentleman in clerical attire entered a bookshop and asked if a translation of the recently-discovered book of Enoch was out. "Enoch! Enoch! Enoch!" said the assistant, trying to summon his biblical knowledge; let me see, wasn't that the Jew who went to hell in a fiery cab?"

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Shelley and Swinburne."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 3 sharp, quarterly meeting, election of officers, etc.; 5.30, tea, tickets only 6d. each; 7, soiree. Tuesday, at 8, social evening.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "External Evidences of Christian Religion"; preceded by a recitation.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7. Mrs. Ann'e Besant, "The Practical Results of Bible Teachings."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "How we become ill."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Capt. Ffoules, "Science of Religion."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Design in Nature."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus, and what did he Teach?"

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "All about the Devil."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Devil."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Shelley on God and the Bible"; general meeting of members after the lecture.

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "The Confusion of Tongue."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 11.15, Mr. J. Rowney, "Bible Morality"; 3.30, Mr. E. T. Garner, "Modern Irreligion: for Good or Evil."

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 6.30, Mr. H. Courtney, "The Apostles' Creed."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, Mr. J. Lawler will lecture. Monday, 7.30, debate between the Rev. S. Brennan and Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Does the Bible Teach a Personal Devil?"

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. G. Standring, "Absurdities of the Church Prayer-Book."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Resurrection: did it happen?"

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, a lecture.

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Has the Religion of Christ been of Benefit to the World?"

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "What is Christianity?"

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. J. Marshall will lecture.

Westminster — Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Miracles and Prophecy as Tests of Truth."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "The World's Religions."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, a concert.

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, a quarterly meeting; all members are requested to attend.

Heckmondwike — At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting.

Huddersfield — Friendly and Trade Societies' Lecture Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. Sam Standring, 3, "Who Wants to go to Heaven?"; 6.30, "St. Paul's Shocking Blasphemy." Admission free.

Hull—Alhambra Music Hall, Porter Street, Mr. G. W. Foote, 10.30, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; 2.30, "Heaven and Hell"; 6.30, "A World Without God."

Leeds—All subscribers to the Leeds Freethought Lecture Fund, commenced about two years ago, are requested to meet at Caves' Temperance Hotel, Briggate, at 3, to consider the best means of utilising the money subscribed.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—7, Mr. Harry Smith, "Mene," first of three sermons on Daniel v.

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—3, half-yearly meeting of members; 6.30, Mr. Joseph Spencer in his humorous and dramatic recitals. Dancing class opens on Wednesday, Oct. 1 at 8, admission 6d, quarter 5s.

Newcastle-on-Tyne Sunday Music League, 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11, (and on Wednesday at 7.30), usual meeting of members.

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street, Mr. R. Forder, 3, "How I became a Freethinker, and why I remain one"; 7, "Was Jesus God, Man, or Myth?"

Oltham — Hall of Science, Horsedge Street, 10.30, quarterly meeting.

Plymouth—100 Union Street, 7, Readings and discussion; all are invited.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. Lush will lecture.

Sheffield — Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. William Heaford, 11, "A Freethinker's View of Christ"; 3, "The Sermon on the Mount Examined and Found Wanting"; 7, "A Vindication of Atheism."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, usual weekly meeting.

Sunderland—Victoria Hall, Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11, "Eight Hours by Law"; 3, "Justification of my Heresy"; 7, "The Political Parties in England and their Prospects."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Huddersfield — Market Cross, on Saturday, Sept. 27, at 7.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Are Nonconformists Christians?"

Manchester — Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 11, Mr. Thomas Park will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London. S.E.—Sept. 28 (morning) Clerkenwell, (evening) Woolwich. Oct 5 (morning) Camberwell; 15, Battersea; 19 (evening) Woolwich; 26 (morning and afternoon) Finsbury Park.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—Oct. 12, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Sept. 28 (morning) outside "Salmon and Ball," Bethnal Green. Oct. 12 (morning) Hyde Park; 19 (morning) Battersea Park, (evening) Battersea Secular Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Sept. 28 (afternoon) Finsbury Park. Oct 5 (evening) Woolwich; 12 (morning) Finsbury Park; 19, Mile End, debate; 26, Woolwich.

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